

top layer. The denier value of the bi-component fibers of the lower layer ranges between 4 and 10 dtex.

In the claims:

A² 1 1. (Amended) A composite material for producing a layer of a
2 disposable absorbent hygienic article that comes into physical contact with the body,
3 made of at least two non-woven material layers joined by thermal processing, where
4 the upper layer for physical contact with the body is formed of a mixture of mono-
5 component fibers and bi-component fibers and the percentage of bi-component fibers
6 amounts to 30 - 70 % by weight of the upper layer, and where the denier of the fibers
7 of the upper layer is at most 3.5 dtex, and where the lower layer includes at least 40
8 % by weight of bi-component fibers whose higher melting component is made of
9 PET and whose lower melting component has a lower melting point than that of the
10 mono-component fibers of the upper layer, and where the denier of the bi-component
11 fibers of the lower layer is between 4 and 10 dtex.

1 2. (Amended) The composite material in accordance with claim 1,
2 characterized in that the upper layer for physical contact with the body has a textured
3 pattern created by calendering, where the percentage of the textured surface
4 comprises 5 to 30 % of the total surface.

1 3. (Amended) The composite material in accordance with claim 2,
2 wherein the percentage of the textured surface comprises 15 to 25 % of the total
3 surface.

1 4. (Amended) The composite material in accordance with claim 1,
2 wherein the surface weight of the upper layer is about 10 to 30 g/m².

1 5. (Amended) The composite material in accordance with claim 4,
2 wherein the surface weight of the upper layer is about 15 to 20 g/m².

1 6. (Amended) The composite material in accordance with claim 1,
2 wherein the fibers of the upper layer are one of hydrophilic and made supple to be
3 permanently hydrophilic.

1 7. (Amended) The composite material in accordance with claim 1,
2 wherein the lower layer comprises at least 60 % by weight bi-component fibers
3 whose higher melting component is made of PET.

1 8. (Amended) The composite material in accordance with claim 7,
2 wherein the lower layer comprises at least 80 % by weight bi-component fibers
3 whose higher melting component is made of PET.

1 9. (Amended) The composite material in accordance with claim 8,
2 wherein the lower layer consists of 100 % of bi-component fibers whose higher
3 melting component is made of PET.

1 10. (Amended) The composite material in accordance with claim 1,
2 wherein the bi-component fibers of the lower layer with PET as higher melting
3 component is a sheath/core fiber.

1 11. (Amended) The composite material in accordance with claim
2 10, wherein the sheath/core fiber has a core positioned eccentrically to the
3 longitudinal center direction of the fiber.

1 12. (Amended) The composite material in accordance with claim
2 11, wherein the denier of the sheath/core fiber is 5 to 8 dtex.

1 13. (Amended) The composite material in accordance with claim
2 12, wherein the denier of the sheath/core fiber is 6 to 7 dtex.

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1 14. (Amended) The composite material in accordance with claim 1,
2 wherein the lower melting component of the bi-component fiber present at least 40 %
3 by weight in the lower layer is made of polyethylene.

1 15. (Amended) An absorbent hygienic article with a fluid-tight
2 layer not in physical contact with a body during use, a retaining element and a fluid-
3 permeable layer furnished on a side of the retaining element in physical contact with
4 the body, wherein the layer furnished on the fluid-permeable side of the retaining
5 element in physical contact with the body comprises a composite material in
6 accordance with claim 1.

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1 16. (Amended) An absorbent hygienic article having a
2 fluid-tight layer not in physical contact with the body during use, a retaining element
3 and a fluid-permeable layer provided on the side of the retaining element in physical
4 contact with the body, where the retaining element comprises one layer of intralinked
5 cellulose fibers with a fluid retention value which is derived from the quotients of the
6 mass (g_{FI}) of the fluid absorbed and the dry mass (g_{Fiber}) of the cellulose fibers and is
7 between 0.6 and 0.9 g_{FI}/g_{Fiber} , wherein the layer of intralinked cellulose fibers contains
8 8 - 15 % by weight of superabsorbent polymer materials, where the fluid-permeable
9 layer provided on the side of the retaining element in physical contact with the body
10 is at least double-layered and an upper of the double layers consists of fibers with a
11 denier of at most 3.5 dtex, while a lower of the double layers comprises bi-
12 component fibers with a denier between 4 and 10 dtex whose higher melting
13 component is made of PET.

1 17. (Amended) The absorbent hygienic article in accordance with
2 claim 16, wherein the retaining element has in addition a layer of non-meshed
3 cellulose fibers with a fluid retention value which is made up of the quotients of the
4 mass (g_{FI}) of the fluid absorbed and the dry mass (g_{Fiber}) of the cellulose fibers and is
5 between 1.0 and 1.4 g_{FI}/g_{Fiber} and at least 20 % by weight of superabsorbent polymer
6 materials.

1 18. (Amended) The absorbent hygienic article in accordance with
2 claim 17, wherein the additional layer of the retaining element is disposed under the
3 layer of intrameshed cellulose fibers.

1 19. (Amended) The absorbent hygienic article in accordance with
2 claim 18, wherein the additional layer has a layer-like area on the side not in physical
3 contact with the body in use which is free of superabsorbent materials.

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Cancel claim 20.